

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

NO. 813. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 1884.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEED," ETC.

CHAPTER XL. DICK AGAIN HEROIC.

DICK, riding direct from Heatherley to The Keep, reached it before Ida, who had a long round by rail to go. He at once sought his aunt to unburden his soul of his wrongs.

"Did you know Ida had gone to Heatherley?"

"Yes."

"What, to meet that fellow?"

"To see Mrs. Pybus."

"To see that Guard, or Chown, or whatever his name is, if he has a name."

"What nonsense, Dick! She promised me not to enter the house."

"Did she promise you not to meet him outside the house, alone, in a lonely place, where they never could have met without an assignation?"

"Ida make an assignation!" in an accent of scornful incredulity.

"Make it and keep it, to bill and coo with that fellow, who ought to be taken up for trying to spread infection," cried Dick with a calculated vehemence extraordinary from him.

"If she met him it was a mere accident."

"A most extraordinary succession and coincidence of accidents, then—to meet him away from the house, in the loneliest part of a lonely bye-path, which no stranger could have found out."

"But you found it, it seems," with a sudden and shrewd suspicion that this obviously worked-up excitement of the impassive Dick was of the offensive-defensive kind. Not that any thought of Anastasia crossed her mind at the moment, but she imagined that Dick had dogged

Ida, quarrelled with her, and hurried home to have the first word. That the quarrel was groundless she had no doubt at all, for Ida was incapable of making such an assignation.

"I was walking with Miss Bompas——"

"Oh!" in the tone which expresses, "Now I understand."

"I was arranging that affair of yours with her in her mother's absence," in an aggrieved tone.

"In the loneliest part of a lonely bye-path," echoed his aunt.

"The walk wasn't of my choosing,"

grumbled Dick in a still more aggrieved tone. "That Miss Bompas seems to have gone off her head ever since the affair of the suicide, for she can talk of nothing else, and would bring me to see the place where she attempted it. Just as we reached it she clutched my arm convulsively, and I looked round to find that fellow stooping over Ida. It seems a favourite tryst of his."

"Of hers, you mean. I suspected all along that this Miss Bompas was at the bottom of those business visits to Ryecote. At such a time, too! All I can say is, if you've lost Ida, you deserve it," with exceeding warmth.

"For surprising her in an assignation!"

"Dick, you're not such a fool as to suspect Ida of an assignation, and I hardly thought you could be so foolish as to pretend to suspect her," with much asperity. "She couldn't do an underhand thing. If she had meant to meet him, she'd have said so. Nothing would induce her to consent to a clandestine meeting, and there was no inducement to it, besides. She's her own mistress, and has a perfect right to meet him, if she likes, or marry him, if she likes, either."

His aunt's white-heat, due not so much

to Dick's aspersion of Ida as to the transparent motive of this aspersion—the covering of his own relations with Anastasia—had the effect of reducing Dick to his accustomed coolness.

"Of course, my dear aunt, she has a perfect right to meet him or marry him, only I thought, perhaps, with her nice sense of honour, she would feel it due to herself to jilt me first."

"What's the plain English of all this abuse of Ida? Not that you found her, naturally enough, talking to her cousin, who has been at the brink of death, but that she surprised you walking with that woman hanging on your arm. I declare I never heard of anything so silly and insane as your entangling yourself with such a woman at such a time! Can't you see what you've done? You've just done all you could not only to damage yourself, but to raise this cousin in Ida's opinion. For how can she believe now that this creature was heartbroken and driven to suicide by his betrayal and desertion? She will now know her to be an artful, perjured woman, and know that you knew it too."

"I've no doubt at all, my dear aunt, that Ida will think all this if you put it into her head; otherwise, I don't suppose her imagination will take so high—or rather, so low—a flight. If you choose to think I can do nothing right, and Ida nothing wrong, of course there's no more to be said. I've given you a very simple explanation—"

"Simple! It's simplicity itself, and adapted to the simplest minds. Only I think I should keep it for them—for Ida, for instance. Do you really suppose I had no idea till now of the meaning of your sudden devotion to business, and to business with such a woman as Mrs. Bompas? Pshaw! I'm not yet in my dotage."

"What you call my 'sudden devotion to business,'" retorted Dick with the air of one contemptuously condescending to meet a contemptible charge; "what you call my 'sudden devotion to business' was unfortunately neither sudden nor pleasant. It was so unpleasant that I didn't choose to trouble you before with an explanation of it. I had to go to Ryecote so often of late simply to keep my creditors at bay. It is true that, though I had worry enough of my own, I took a good deal of trouble to arrange your affair with Mrs. Bompas, and even that other scandal—the threatened breach of promise suit—with her daughter. Not, I need

hardly say, to spare that fellow the disgrace and punishment he deserves, but simply and solely to save Ida pain. I had just succeeded in arranging this last business when we met those two, and in gratitude to the girl, who had really behaved most generously, I introduced her to Ida, who wouldn't condescend even to return her bow. I think, then, you may believe me, my dear aunt, when I assure you that no one regrets more, or with more reason, than myself my foolish share in the business. I can only promise you that I shall never again meddle officiously either in your affairs or in hers."

So saying, Dick quitted the room and the house in the deepest dudgeon, or an admirable imitation of it—which, his aunt herself couldn't decide.

Not till next morning after breakfast did he reappear, and then only to reproach his aunt and Ida by a manner reserved to sullenness. Some letters had come for him in his absence, and one of them he tossed, when he had read it, with a gesture of scorn, to his aunt, and then quitted the room.

"DEAR CAPTAIN BRABAZON,—On hearing the particulars of that meeting this morning, my mother retracted her consent to my withdrawal from the suit. She cannot see, and I cannot myself see, why we should be asked to show such consideration for the feelings of Miss Luard, who herself shows so little consideration for the feelings of others. At the same time my mother wishes me to thank you for your very generous offer, and still more for the very generous manner in which it was made. She hopes that you will kindly spare us the pain of a personal interview to press this request again—in vain—upon us. She thinks that legal matters are best transacted through lawyers, and you will, I'm sure, forgive me for agreeing with her after my distressing experience of this morning. You at least were then so kind and considerate that I think you will be glad to hear that I am better. It was foolish of me to take that walk, for I always feel faint when I pass that—that—Yet the walk has a kind of fascination for me.—Let me again thank you for the assistance and sympathy you were so good to give me at such a moment, and ask you to believe me to be sincerely and gratefully yours,
ANASTASIA BOMPAS."

This letter was a great relief to Mrs. Tuck, helping her to believe that she

believed what she wished true with her whole heart. When Ida had given her version of the meeting, Mrs. Tuck inferred from it that Archie had completely exculpated himself, inculpated Dick, and recovered with interest his cousin's affections.

Now, she truly believed Archie utterly worthless. His base selfishness in allowing Ida to incur the risk of infection confirmed her worst impressions of him, for Ida had not thought it worth mentioning that Mrs. Pybus (notwithstanding the precautions she took) had the doctor's assurance that there was now not the least danger of infection. But, besides his moral, there was Archie's social worthlessness to make him simply odious in Mrs. Tuck's eyes. From every possible point of view he was objectionable—abominable to Mrs. Tuck's thinking—as a suitor of Ida's.

She would have been rejoiced, therefore, to keep Ida to her engagement, if only to secure her from Archie. But besides and above this, she worshipped Dick in spite of the few faults she could see in him. With, then, these two overpowering motives to bias her belief, it is not to be wondered at if she began to persuade herself of the truth of Dick's defence.

To Ida the letter was conclusive. It must be remembered that her view of Dick was very different from that of the reader. Dick had shown himself a hero in saving her life at the risk to himself of a frightful death; and had been hardly less heroic in pressing upon her, when she was penniless, a suit which, when she was an heiress, he could hardly bring himself to urge. Here now was a third act of heroism—his attempt for her sake to save his rival the exposure and disgrace of a breach of promise suit—in perfect keeping with the other two. Therefore, that which was antecedently probable to her thinking, was made absolutely certain by this letter from Miss Bompas. For Ida's mind belonged to that despondent class to which the wish is father, not to the thought, but to the fear. Minds, like metals, absorb the kind of light which they give off—despondent minds what makes against them; sanguine minds what makes for them. Ida was all the more disposed to believe that Dick's relations with Anastasia were of the business and magnanimous kind he represented them to be, because the only other construction of them held out to her a hope of escape from the wretchedness of her false position.

After Mrs. Tuck, having read the letter,

had handed it to Ida, she exclaimed as though to herself:

"Dear! I wish I hadn't been so hasty; but the mere mention of that girl made me forget myself and Dick. He has always been such a stock and stone where women are concerned, that I might have known he would never have stooped to a flirtation with any one, and least of all with that creature. But you said nothing, Ida!"

"No; but——"

"You cut that woman! Of course you did." Then, remembering that whatever she said against Anastasia was in Archie's favour, she hastened to add: "The girl herself may be very much to be pitied, but after her mother's outrageous conduct here, you couldn't do otherwise than cut her."

However, there was no possibility of rehabilitating Anastasia in Ida's opinion. Whatever Dick might be, Anastasia was a wily, wicked, odious woman.

"He would never have thought of introducing her if he had known what sort of woman she was," answered Ida in implicit justification of Archie.

But Mrs. Tuck was not going to imperil a now nearly certain victory by accepting battle on this doubtful field.

"Well, perhaps not, my dear. The fact is, he was too much set upon his object to be nice about his instruments. If he forgot for a moment what was due to you, it was because he was thinking so much of doing you this service. But then, how were you to know this? He had not the least right to resent your doing what you couldn't help doing in your ignorance of the circumstances. But, Ida, I don't think it's that he resents. From something he let fall yesterday, I fancy jealousy has a good deal to do with his ill-humour. There, my dear, you needn't defend yourself against such an absurd suspicion to me. I know very well that your feeling towards your cousin is, and could be now, only a feeling of pity. But you know how a man, so much in love as Richard is, will mistake trifles light as air. And I must frankly say, my dear—speaking from your own account of the affair—he might naturally feel hurt to be so snubbed by you and your cousin at the very moment when he was doing what he could to render both of you a very great service."

This was a conscience-smiting speech, and struck home.

"It was very generous of him," Ida said, not ardently at all, but penitently, and

with a face of keen distress, less at the thought of the wrong she had done Dick, than at the thought of the falsehood and unhappiness of her own position.

"You must let me tell him you said so, Ida, and he will forgive me my hasty scolding for the good news," cried Mrs. Tuck joyfully. "And, my dear, I think I wouldn't go again to Heatherley. Of course I know your visits mean nothing; but Richard is rather sore and sensitive about them. My dear, jealousy is the shadow of love, and the brighter the light the blacker the shadow, you know."

"I shall have to go once to bid my cousin good-bye," said Ida desolately.

"Good-bye! Why, where is he going?"

"I don't know. He doesn't know himself yet. He's going to live abroad."

"Always?"

"Always," rising to leave the room.

Dick on his return in the evening, still unappeased and sullen, was received by his aunt with a flag of truce. Ida was penitent, and expressed her penitence in the flattering form of praise of Dick's generosity. This news, which lost nothing in Mrs. Tuck's version, was received by Dick with a rather gloomy ungraciousness. His finest feelings had been so hurt as not to be wholly healed in a moment.

"Does she mean to break with that fellow?" asked he, as though issuing an ultimatum.

"I don't know what you mean by break with him," answered Mrs. Tuck with some asperity, annoyed by his morose and grudging acceptance of the olive-branch. "There's nothing to break off there."

Then Dick, perceiving he was overdoing the part of indignant virtue, rejoined more pleasantly:

"You wouldn't have said so if you had seen them together yesterday."

"I told you their meeting yesterday must have been a mere accident, and so it was."

Then Mrs. Tuck gave him Ida's account of her chance encounter with her cousin.

"It might have been a mere accident, as you say; but it looked a very happy accident."

"Would you have had her cut her cousin because he has been at death's door, and had other troubles of all kinds? As for their meeting having any other meaning, it is enough to say he is going to quit the country."

"What! To escape this suit?"

"Quit it altogether, for good."

"He can't go till this suit is settled; as it might have been but for his own insolence yesterday."

"Oh, I don't think the suit matters much, or will come to much. You see there's so little to lose on either side, either of money or character."

"At least it will keep him in the country till it comes off."

"Then, if I were you, Dick, I should continue your most generous intervention, and get it settled."

This she said with a significance which made Dick doubt her belief in his story. In truth, she shot this arrow as an insurance against Dick's laughing at her simplicity, the kind of ridicule she dreaded most.

CHRONICLES OF ENGLISH COUNTIES.

WARWICKSHIRE. PART III.

THERE is no more imposing view than that from Avon Bridge, just out of Warwick town, where the winding Avon murmurs below, and, half concealed by the luxuriant foliage, rises the hoary rock with its mantle of the freshest verdure, while the proud feudal towers of Warwick Castle blend with its mass, and continue it in a long line of turrets and battlements. Here we seem actually to be in presence of the feudal magnificence of other days, while the very name of Warwick brings to the mind impressions strong, if vague, of the stalwart bearers of the title in ancient days, and the stirring scenes in which they bore their part; culminating in the great Kingmaker whom Bulwer Lytton has not inaptly called *The Last of the Barons*. Some may be wise to remain content with this charming glimpse, as it were, into another and vanished world, for perhaps the charm is a little dispelled on a nearer approach, when it is seen how much of the great pile bears a modern and an artificial appearance. Fire, too, has destroyed much that was characteristic, not, indeed, of the old line of strong, ironclad barons, but of the more modern Grevilles, dating from the days of the Stuarts, and with stirring memories of their own.

It is strange, too, that through all the varied annals of those who have occupied this castle, and borne the historic title of Warwick, popular affection has clung to the legendary lore of the ancient Saxon lords of tower and town with unswerving fidelity. Not with the Kingmaker, but with the semi-fabulous Guy, is Warwick

associated in ballad and chap-book story; not with the Wars of the Roses, but with the slayer of the giant Colebrand, and the monster cow of Dunsmore Heath. Still in the porter's lodge of the castle are shown the relics of the old Champion of England against Danes and other monsters, his helm and coat-of-mail, his two-handed sword, his gigantic porridge-pot, big enough to cook the mess of a whole regiment of ordinary warriors. De Neubourgs, Maudits, Beauchamps, Nevilles, Plantagenets, have fretted through their respective parts, and yet have scarcely succeeded in impressing the popular imagination; all these were the champions of a caste, an order, or a dynasty. But the legendary Guy of Warwick, the champion of a people against a barbarian horde, has in fame outlived them all.

In any way, it seems clear that this rocky promontory over the river, commanding such a stretch of rich river-meadow, with fertile pastures, and fruitful cornfields without end, must, from the very earliest times, have been the stronghold of some powerful chief. The monkish chroniclers attributed the first building of a castle on the rock to Gutheline, by some called Cymbeline, of whom, as the father of Imogen in Shakespeare, we have some knowledge, if not of a very accurate kind. Nor is it unlikely, as the same author affirms, that here Caractacus, whom the Welsh call Caradawg, held the fort against the Romans. This Caradawg was, the Welsh bards relate, the son of Bran the Blessed, who, being a prisoner in Rome for seven years, as a hostage for his son, brought the Christian faith to the nation of the Cymry; and in this way Warwick might well have been one of the earliest seats of the Christian faith in England, when that faith was still in its infancy. Anyhow, Warwick is said to have been the seat of British bishops, the last of whom, St. Dubritius, retired into Wales before the invasion of Saxon heathendom. And thus vanish the half-mythic heroes of the Britons, such as Morvidus, who slew a giant, who had assailed him with a young tree plucked up by the roots—the origin of the ragged-staff in the badge of the Earls of Warwick, just as the bear is said to shadow forth the renown of Arthgal—a mighty hunter in those days of old, whose name in Welsh is significant of his prowess over bruin.

To these succeed the heroes of the Saxons, hardly more substantial as historic personages, and yet not to be scouted as

impostors—the famous Guy, and Reynburn, the son of Guy, “who having been stolen away in his childhood and carried into Russia, upon his return to England wedded the beautiful Lady Leonetta, daughter to King Athelstan, and dying beyond seas was buried in a certain island near unto Venice.”

From these pleasant glimpses into the fairyland of history, we come into the gloom of written records, where the fancy may be tripped up at any moment by grim-visaged facts and inexorable dates. And so in Doomsday we have the curt record of Alwinus as vice-comes of Warwick, for strictly there was no Earl of Warwick till after the Conquest, as the great Saxon Earldom of Mercia included the whole district. Alwin's son, Turchill, was one of the few Saxon nobles who retained high office under the Conqueror, the care of the castle and town of Warwick being left in his hands; but soon after, Turchill disappears from the scene, and we come upon the first Norman Earl of Warwick, one Henry, seigneur of Neubourg in Normandy, where his castle commanded a fertile plain like that surrounding Kenilworth, whose rich verdure must have made Warwickshire seem familiar, although the latter is of richer beauty. Roger, the next Earl, carried war into Wales, and conquered Gowerland on his own account, that lonely peninsula of Gower, where he has left traces of his handiwork in the ruins of a fine baronial castle. To Roger succeeded William his son, and after William came Waleran. Waleran's days were vexed by the incident of a missing brother, reported as slain in the Holy Land, but who turned up—either he or his double—and claimed Earldom and castle, but could not prevail against the rights of possession, sustained by stout men-at-arms and skilful bowmen. Waleran dying, left a young widow and infant son, Henry, and it is noticeable that the Countess gave a thousand pounds and ten palfreys to the King, that she might continue a widow as long as she pleased, and retain the custody of her children.

During Henry's long minority, King John gave the lordship of Gower to William de Braose, who is noticeable in Welsh annals, but who has not much to do with Warwick. The Earl, however, seems to have acquiesced in the King's disposal of his belongings, for he was one of the few who remained constantly faithful to King John and to King Henry his

successor, and in opposition to the great majority of his order. The loyal Henry was succeeded by an equally loyal Thomas, who died without issue, so that the lordly heritage came to his sister Margaret, widow of the Earl of Pembroke.

The lot of an heiress in those days of so-called chivalry was not a very enviable one. If a maid, her hand was disposed of virtually to the highest bidder; a widow, as less amenable to orders, had more choice in the matter. Thus when Margaret came into possession of the Earldom and its strong castle, the king—Henry the Third—"being at Bordeaux in France, sealed a charter to John de Plesssets—a favourite courtier—granting the marriage of her in case he could get her good will; and if not, that he should have the fine due thereupon to the King." Lest Margaret should steal a march upon them and marry somebody else, she was called upon to give security not to marry anyone displeasing to the King. To end all difficulties, Margaret at last made up her mind to marry De Plesssets, who enjoyed the Earldom during his lifetime. But the royal charter did not ensure a family, and the pair dying without issue, the inheritance ran back to the descendant of Waleran's daughter Alice, who bore the ill-omened name of Mauduit. And Mauduit had little luck with his Earldom, for he lost his castle, which was taken by the rival garrison of Kenilworth, neither had he any heir to succeed him, except his sister's son, William de Beauchamp, with whom began the famous line of warriors and statesmen, who have made the name of Warwick historically interesting. Of this line was Guy, called after the Saxon hero, the Black Dog of Ardern, as he was named by the favourite Gaveston, who paid for the sneer with his life.

And now we come to Earls, of whose persons we can form some idea from existing sepulchral monuments. The collegiate church of St. Mary of Warwick has suffered severely from fire, but happily the choir of the church and the Beauchamp Chapel were spared in the several conflagrations; and here lies Thomas Beauchamp, the son of the Black Dog of Ardern, as well in body as in his marble effigy, side by side with his faithful Countess, who died in the same year, their hands clasped in the marble sleep of centuries. About the knee of the Earl may still be discerned the knightly garter, for he was one of the original knights of that order. In the same

church, too, remain the monumental brasses of another Thomas, the son of the last-mentioned pair; the tomb itself was destroyed in the great fire of 1694. This Thomas was guardian to the young King, Richard the Second, and was concerned in the suppressing of Wat Tyler's rebellion—"that foul insurrection of the Commons"—as Dugdale calls it, which had spread even into Warwickshire, and among the Earl's own tenants. Some palace intrigues drove the Earl from power, and he was presently banished to the Isle of Man, and then brought to more rigorous imprisonment in the Tower, while Thomas Holand, the son of fair Joan of Kent, and the young King's half-brother, enjoyed and occupied his castle and estates, and had the custody of his heir.

With King Richard's collapse, and the change of dynasty, Warwick was restored to honours and estates, but did not long enjoy them. His will, dated in 1400, mentions the sword and coat of mail, the relics of the famous Guy. Thomas died in the following year, and was succeeded by Richard, one of the grandest and most splendid nobles of his age. He made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with a magnificent retinue, passing through Italy, and being entertained on his route with all kinds of pageants and tournaments by the nobles of the great cities. At Jerusalem he was made much of by the patriarch, and even the Souldan's lieutenant, who had heard of Guy of Warwick from the story-tellers of his own race, received him with all honour. From Jerusalem Richard returned to Venice, and then set forth on an adventurous journey through the wilder parts of Europe, to Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Prussia, and Westphalia, everywhere feasting, jousting, and exhibiting his knightly prowess and famous horsemanship. On his return to England, our Earl was retained as the special servant of the new King, Henry the Fifth, when he showed himself a stern foe to the Lollards, and presently, as governor of Calais, he entertained the chivalry of France and England with splendid tournaments. Soon after, we find Earl Richard riding off to the council of Constance with a train of bishops. And then he followed his master to the French wars; one of the faithful few at Agincourt, among the names to be henceforth familiar as household words—

Harry the King, Bedford, and Exeter,
Warwick, and Talbot

At the siege of Rouen which followed,

Warwick's pavilion stood between King Henry's tent and the bold height of St. Catherine, with its fort showering down stone bullets upon the besiegers—the post of honour and of danger; and when Fort Catherine was taken, he occupied Port Martainville, close under the city walls. When Rouen was taken, and all Normandy submitted to the conqueror, rich lordships in the conquered land rewarded the companions of the King. But Nemesis pursued the actors in this wanton invasion, and the ruin of the feudal aristocracy in the succeeding Wars of the Roses may be directly traced to the greed and demoralisation brought about by the spoiling of France. Henry, wasted away by some mysterious disease, passed into a premature grave, and his son, crowned King of France and England, passed through the sad life of a gentle idiot, the sport of warring factions, to a miserable tragic death. Nor did our Earl long survive the conquest he so strenuously helped in, but died at Rouen, and was buried with much solemn pageantry in this chapel of his attached to St. Mary's, Warwick. His effigy of latten gilt, reclining upon a grey marble tomb, is one of the best works of art of the period, and has been a delight, in its full detail of armour and knightly accoutrement, to many generations of archaeologists.

Henry, the son of Earl Richard, succeeded to his father's honours, and was created Duke of Warwick, the first and last of the title. For he left only a daughter, who died forthwith unmarried, upon which castle and Earldom devolved upon Richard Neville, afterwards the Kingmaker, son and heir of Salisbury; who had married a daughter of Earl Richard's, and through her obtained this splendid dower. And yet the poorest cottager in England need not have envied the destinies of this splendid house of Warwick. The Kingmaker's two daughters were each wedded to Princes—the eldest, Ann, to Edward Prince of Wales, and afterwards to Richard, who became King of England; yet she lived miserable and neglected, and died, it is said, a death of her husband's contriving, while her issue perished in immaturity. The other sister, Isabel, married the Duke of Clarence, and had a son, Edward Plantagenet, who, if strict hereditary right had prevailed, should have been king, but who spent a wretched infancy and boyhood in prison, and was executed, ere yet a man, on some miserable pretext, in order to make good the title of

the house of Tudor. There was a daughter, too, married to Sir Richard Pole, and after her brother's execution gratified with the dignity of Countess of Salisbury, whose terrible end most will remember, dragged by her grey hairs to the block.

And now the old, time-worn towers of Warwick are bestowed upon a new race, springing, likely enough, from the ranks of those who had long toiled and spun to maintain all the gilded splendour of the proud house of Warwick. The father of the Dudleys is said to have been a carpenter, one John, born in the town of Dudley, who, travelling about for work, found employment at Lewes Priory, in Sussex. The monks found him useful, and called him John of Dudley. His son Edmund, a very clever boy, was taken notice of by the prior, sent to school and college at the expense of the convent, and, showing great abilities in finance, was taken into the King's exchequer, and eventually made one of the justices fiscal, whose mission was to exact all kinds of unpalatable fines and contributions. The further history of the Dudleys has already been recited. And here, in the chapel of the Beauchamps, lies the handsome, proud, and wicked Earl of Leicester, in all the bravery of marble and alabaster, and close by him his brother, known as the good Earl of Warwick. And in the choir is the marble altar-tomb of Fulk Greville, Lord Brook, whose monument records that he was servant to Queen Elizabeth, councillor to King James, and friend to Sir Philip Sidney.

On this Lord Brook King James bestowed the castle of Warwick, then a dilapidated ruin, which had been used as a county prison. Fulk rebuilt the place almost from its foundation, and made it one of the grand houses of the period. The son of this servant and councillor of Princes struck out a new line for himself, being one of the most active on the Parliamentary side in the beginning of the civil wars. This Lord Brook raised the militia of Warwick, and led them in arms to join the Earl of Essex, who was marching towards London from Worcester, with the intention of intercepting the King's forces, who had moved from Shrewsbury with the same objective before him.

Charles had reached Banbury, in Oxfordshire, before he had news of Essex's advance, and there the royal forces were halted, and changed front. Essex meantime had reached Kineton, or Kingeton—

supposed to be from King's Town, and there is a King John's Well in the neighbourhood to give countenance to the derivation—and between the two camps lay the breezy heights of Edgehill, whose ridge commands a fine uninterrupted range of these midland regions.

On the King's march to Banbury a little incident occurred which, variously related by Walpole, Macaulay, and others, gives a graphic touch to our impressions of those days of civil wars. As the King marched to Edgecot, near Banbury, on the 22nd of October, 1642, he saw a person hunting in the fields not far from Shuckleburgh, with a good pack of hounds in merry cry. Upon which the King fetched a deep sigh, and asked who that gentleman might be that hunted so merrily that morning, when he was going to fight for his crown. The merry hunter was the Squire of Shuckleburgh, who, brought before the King, was so overcome and inspired by his majesty's friendly and yet melancholy chiding that he immediately went home, armed all his tenants, and joined the King at Edgehill on the following day.

The commanding heights of Edgehill have no doubt been the scene of sanguinary struggles of which no history has come down to us. One such battle is recorded in means more lasting than brass or marble, in the shape of a horse cut out of the turf on a sloping hill-side, and known as the Red Horse, from the red sandstone which gives its prevailing colour to the soil, and will suggest a similar monument on the Berkshire hills. The same custom of scouring the horse at prescribed intervals of years was observed at both places.

Charles's forces must have had the red horse of Tysoe Vale in full view as they toiled up the troublesome ascent of Edgehill. The King had resolved to begin the attack, but no enemy was found to dispute the ridge, but among the fields at the foot of the hills, in the country that lay before them, in the calm of a quiet autumnal Sunday morning, there gleamed occasional flashes as the sun touched the steel of pike-heads or glanced upon a polished corslet. The enemy was below in force, and the first serious blow in the civil war was about to be struck. The King's men came cheering down the hill, and the Parliamentary men were ready to receive them at the foot. There were perhaps ten thousand men on each side, few of whom had before shared in actual shock of battle. All was

uncertainty and suspense on either side, when Prince Rupert with his horsemen attacked furiously, and drove the Parliamentary cavalry in headlong flight before him. The right wing of the Parliamentary army, consisting of Lord Brook's sturdy Warwickshire militia, was also thrown into disorder, and the day seemed already won for the King, when the royal centre, making sure of victory, rushed forward in disorder, and were met by a solid phalanx of pikemen under Sir William Balfour, who made great slaughter among the King's men. The Earl of Lindsey was mortally wounded, and Sir Edward Verney, the standard-bearer, was killed, and the royal standard taken, but afterwards recovered. The battle began at noon, and continued till dusk, when either side remained on the field, and both claimed the victory. Essex, however, first withdrew, and retired to Warwick, while Charles marched back to Banbury.

Not far from Edgehill lies Compton Winyates—which some read as Vineyard—the seat of the Compton family, Earls of Northampton. At Edgehill battle the Earl of Northampton fought for the King—a zealous Cavalier, who had pitted himself against Lord Brook, and had striven to bring Warwickshire over to the royal cause with but little effect. The Earl was killed at Hopton Heath in the year following. The old house at Compton was built, it is said, of the brick and stone from Fulbrook Castle, that was raised by the stout Duke of Bedford, famous in the French wars of the fifteenth century.

Long Compton, which is close to the Gloucestershire border, is to be noticed as the scene of a strange monkish legend, recorded by Dugdale, which is not without interest. It seems that once upon a time the parish was visited by St. Augustine, a circumstance probable enough in itself, as he was actually in the neighbourhood on his way to a conference with the Welsh bishops in the neighbouring marches. Already, it seems, a Christian congregation existed at Compton, the priest of which had a serious dispute with a Saxon knight, who refused to pay tithe, and who was in consequence excommunicated. The people thronged the church to hear the holy man from Rome, but before commencing the office of the mass, St. Augustine stood forth and proclaimed that all excommunicated persons should quit the church before the mass was said. Thereupon a man burst from his grave, that was within the church,

and walked forth. The saint continued the office unmoved, but at its conclusion he marched out at the head of the awe-struck parishioners, and questioned the dead man as to the cause of his extraordinary conduct. He had been excommunicated some hundreds of years ago, it seemed, and for not paying tithe, and upon that St. Augustine summoned the priest who had excommunicated him, a venerable priest of the British nation, who rose from his grave to answer the saint's appeal. St. Augustine was no friend to the British clergy, who were fearfully astray on the matter of keeping Easter and the tonsure, and who hardly recognised his authority. But on this question of tithe he was one with them. Still, the old British chief had suffered, no doubt, and upon his submission and confession the saint absolved him, and he returned thankfully to his tomb. The British priest asked nothing better than to be left to his repose, and the incident ended with the conversion of the Saxon knight, and the due collection of the tithe. For a certain boldness of outline in this legend the monk who chronicles it feels it necessary to account. For never, he writes, would the hard-headed—meaning pig-headed—English have become Christians but for such miracles as these. But the legend has another kind of interest, for the chronicler assumes the existence of an uninterrupted Christian worship here from the days of the early British church.

There now only remains to visit the birthplace of Shakespeare, and his tomb at Stratford-upon-Avon, a place of pilgrimage for all the world. A visit to the grand old church, with the river flowing by its graveyard, gives us a more vivid impression of the man Shakespeare than can be obtained from any amount of reading. The half-figure of the poet looking out with bright tranquility from its niche in the chancel wall, carries conviction of its truth and faithfulness to nature at the first glance. And it is a sensation never to be forgotten to stand upon the very spot where lie the bones of the great dramatist, and to read :

Good friend, for Jesu's sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heare,
Blest be ye man ye spares thes stones,
And curst be he ye moves my bones.

FREE LODGINGS IN PARIS.

How many people die of hunger every year in Paris? More, probably, in proportion to the population than in London,

reckoning, that is, those who do not wait for the end but leap into the Seine and are found next morning on the wet slabs of the Morgue. The French are not so much given as we are to talking of these things. In the Crimean War "our correspondent" (who then sprang into full-fledged existence) chronicled every frost-bite and every case of insufficient rations. How the French got on no one but their Government ever knew for certain, though sometimes (as, for instance, when the Dobrudscha fever caught them) their sufferings must have been heavier than ours.

There must be many more cases of starvation in Paris than in London, for in Paris there are more people who wake every morning without the least idea how they shall get through the day. There are no workhouses, and therefore no casual wards; and at the bureaux de bienfaisance the enquiries are too strict for those whose antecedents won't bear examination. They get through the day—the men, for Heaven knows what becomes of the women—if it is wet by sitting about in the sale-rooms, or going into the churches, where, of course, there is a little begging to be done; or attending the public meetings, where they may perhaps earn a few sous by hissing or cheering. If it is fine there are the quays, and it is astonishing how long a Frenchman can cheat the pangs of hunger by watching other Frenchmen fish. But at night, what becomes of the chevaliers d'industrie whose industry has wholly failed them? Some of them, we know, prowl about seeking whom they may devour; hiding in quarries or among limekilns when the police are troublesome; managing now and then to plunder some belated foot-passenger and throw him into the river. But these are the "dangerous class," the fellows whom Eugene Sue painted years ago in the *Mystères de Paris*, and whose manners M. Zola finds so interesting nowadays. There are a great many who are not dangerous yet, and some who never could become so; and, till 1878, there was actually no place in all Paris where they could get a night's lodging. A few used to get an uncertain shelter in hackney-coaches whose kind-hearted drivers would let them in till they picked up a fare. A very few had scraped acquaintance with some gentleman's coachman and got an occasional bed in the stable. But for the mass of them—workmen amongst them who had had a quarrel with their employers, and whose *livret* was therefore not

satisfactory—there was nothing but the streets.

It was not always so. The old Revolution, inaugurating the reign of equality and fraternity, suppressed the two night-refuges (one for each sex), which had lasted from the twelfth century. That for men provided sleeping-room for two hundred. It was a religious foundation, of course, under the hospitalières of St. Augustine. Being religious it was, of course, secularised; and being endowed, its revenues were swallowed up in that deepest abyss of jobbery which the world has ever seen, the public purse of the Directory. The building (a re-build of the seventeenth century) lasted till 1813. The *Intermédiaire* (a sort of Paris Antiquarian) lately published the inscription which might be read till the place was pulled down, and the Blanc-Manteaux (Whitefriars) market built on its room. It ran thus in strange old French: "L'Hospital de Saint Anastase dit Saints Gervais ou les pauvres et rangers en passant par cet ville sont resus a loger et coucher pour trois nuits. Les personnes charitables pouron y contribuer de leurs aumosnes pour ayder a y subvenir." The women's refuge, with seventy-nine beds, was the Hospital of St. Catherine and St. Opportuna. The nuns were called *Catherinettes*; they fed at the same table with their poor guests, and they also had to bury dead prisoners and unclaimed bodies that had been exposed at the Morgue. The Revolution ate up their endowment also. "Night-refuges foster idleness and vagabondage; therefore their revenues shall be given to hospitals." There was an excuse for this: the hospitals were indeed in a wretched state. In the wholesale confiscation of Church property their revenues had been sadly cut down. Assignats lowered the value of what little had been saved: and a hospital is far more a necessity of life to a great city than a night-refuge. For some time after "The Year Three," the "central administration of the hospitals" was as badly arranged as anything else in the Republic. Of course, during the First Empire there was plenty to think of besides looking after the homeless poor. When peace came, one wonders the French did not go in for a poor law; but they preferred periodical revolutions to what we, since Elizabeth's reign, have accepted as a necessary evil. They contented themselves with stringent rules against begging—who has not seen the notice at the entrance of village or country town: "*La mendicité est interdite dans*

ce lieu"!—and by opening the bureaux, which are invaluable to poor people of stainless character, but which do not really meet all the improvable cases. Nor are the doles from convents of any great use for this class. Charitable ladies have their own poor whom they look after, and so have sisterhoods and brotherhoods; but a great many of the deserving poor would think themselves degraded by accepting such help.

The existing night-refuges—three for men, making up five hundred beds, and two for women—are wholly unsectarian, the former managed by laymen. But lay nurses have turned out such a failure that the sisters have been let in again. They, at any rate, do not mistake draughts for embrocations, or leave babies lying for hours without any covering.

Till 1878, when the first of the men's refuges was opened (that for women was started the year after), the associations that devoted themselves to the chance poor were strictly religious. There were the *Petites Sœurs*, who began in 1842; the *Sœurs Aveugles de St. Paul*, dating from 1853; the *Dames du Calvaire*, from 1874. It was Count Amedée des Cars, of a very old noble family, a thorough society man, a member of the Jockey Club, son of an officer who had highly distinguished himself in the old Algiers war, who first took in hand the re-establishment of a night-refuge. The thing had been done at Marseilles in the *Canébière* some years before, by M. Massabo. His institution served as a model, and several charitable men, such as Dutpoy, the banker, Leturc, etc., helped.

The first thing was to get a license. You must do that in Paris before you can take lodgers, and in the eye of the law the refuge would be a lodging-house. Happily, the chief of the first division of police was M. Lecour, author of *La Charité à Paris*; and he smoothed the way for a work which was just after his own heart.* The old farmhouse of Monceaux, not pulled down, though a mass of houses had grown up all around, was easily fitted up with twenty beds, which were in a day or two, as applicants crowded in, increased to forty. The great shops sent presents of bedding, etc.; the Courcelles Washing Company offered to

* M. Lecour has since resigned, disgusted at the way in which the municipality has been going in for persecution. He did not like to be the instrument in closing orphanages and other good works because Sisters or Brothers managed them.

take the washing free of cost; a doctor volunteered to prescribe; a chemist to give the medicines. Subscriptions came in. An eccentric old man, M. de Lamaze, then dying at Amélie les Bains, gave them one thousand five hundred francs towards a second house—a big warehouse on the Boulevard Vaugirard, of which the great bookseller Hachette had a lease valued at two thousand six hundred francs. Hachette accepted one thousand five hundred, and so they were allowed to take possession at once, and as M. de Lamaze gave them one hundred thousand francs for fitting up and furnishing, and put them down in his will for a hundred and eleven thousand two hundred more, they called the place after his name. The winter of 1879, unusually severe, had called out a great deal of temporary help. The *Figaro*, for instance, besides a soup-kitchen, had set up a night-home. When warm weather came, all the *Figaro's* bedding and pots and pans were handed to Count des Cars and his committee. One of the managers looks in every night at one of the refuges; they take it in turn like poor-law guardians. The responsible overseers are half-pay captains, a class supposed to combine rough-and-ready tenderness with power of keeping order. At seven the doors open, and none are admitted, save in exceptional cases, after nine. The incomer is not searched as in our workhouses. He walks up to the overseer's desk, gives his name, hands in his papers, and tells what he pleases of his history, showing his "livret" if he have one. If not, the committee will provide him with one, and so enable him to make "a new departure." Then he gets his sleeping-ticket, and a ticket for a bath, which is so much appreciated, that a good many come in, take their bath, and then walk off. If he is very hard up, he whispers something in the captain's ears, and gets a ticket for soup or for a hunch of bread. Last year the committee gave out thirty-seven thousand bed-tickets, very nearly thirty thousand bread-tickets, and eighteen thousand seven hundred soup-tickets. All the fittings are of the simplest, the bedsteads iron, the mattresses stuffed with seaweed—so, for that matter, is a good deal of the over-cheap showy London furniture—the soap in the bath-room is a semi-liquid paste—solid soap used to be stolen. There is a library, and those who want to write are provided with pens, ink, and paper, and their letters are stamped for them and sent to the post. They are not read first; and

M. Maxime de Camp, the well-known sociologist, who has published an interesting account of these refuges, says you can at once spot an old gaol-bird, for, when he has written his letter, he is sure to bring it up open. A very necessary department is the "pouaillerie," which we may euphemise into "disinfecting-room." Here the clothes are baked to free them from vermin, while the wearers are abed. At nine in comes the visitor for the evening, says a few words on the duty of hard work and resignation and struggling against difficulties, and says the Lord's Prayer and the Hail Mary, premising that those who do not care to join in, are not in the least bound to do so, because the committee is especially anxious to discourage hypocrisy. Almost everybody stands up and responds—M. du Camp cannot tell whether simply out of courtesy or because the words come back to them like an echo of childhood. In the morning they are turned out; the rule being that no one is admitted for more than three consecutive nights, and that three months must have elapsed since the last admission. This rule is, however, relaxed in the case of really deserving workmen seeking employment.

A vast number of these, mostly countrymen, are always wandering about Paris. Some of the cases are very sad. One poor young fellow from Luxemburg, we are told, had passed his B.A. with great éclat at his native university. He knew four languages, and Paris seemed just the place to bring his talents to. But he had been for months seeking a situation, and was starving when he heard of the refuge.

A very different case was that of a bleary-eyed fellow with greasy ringlets and several rings, seemingly gold, on his dirty fingers. He had been in prison as a vagrant beggar, and had come out the day before with thirty-nine francs, his prison earnings. Now he hadn't a farthing. "J'ai fait la noce," was his explanation. "I had a spree, and what else could I do after seven months of beans and water?"

Another frequent type is the Paris shop-boy. A vintner's man, who got three francs a day, struck for an extra ten sous, and had been ever so long out of work. "Would you take a job now at two and a half francs?" "No." "Why?" "What would the others say?" A question which, says M. du Camp, involves the secret of all strikes.

The refuge takes in men of all nations. Next to French, Belgians come the oftenest,

then Germans, then Swiss. The strange thing is they get very few old men; let us hope the old are provided for at home, or in almshouses. Sometimes a man's clothes will fall to pieces in the "pouaillerie"; hence the committee are grateful for gifts of cast-off garments. Shoes they are obliged to have made—the foot of the average tramp is so much bigger than that of the man who gives away still serviceable shoes.

The help they furnish is not only valuable as giving a chance to the honest workman, but also because it keeps off the streets those who might else take to crime if they were left to sleep in the streets. And the institution is popular with all classes. The subscriptions range from fifteen hundred francs to fifty centimes. An engine-man sends six stamps; a workman's family, after reading about it in the *Petit Journal*, sends ten. This spring, Meissonnier, as everybody knows, has celebrated his jubilee by exhibiting his pictures. Of his receipts, a fifth is to be given to the poor of Poissy, the rest is to go to the refugees' committee. They expect to realise enough to build a fourth house, to be called after the great painter. The women's *Hospitalité de Nuit* is worked by that *Société Philanthropique* which was founded in 1780 to take charge of sick children. Louis the Sixteenth gave it five hundred francs a month; but, along with other like works, it came to an end when the monarchy was overthrown. In "The Year Eight," however, it was set up again, and added to its children's hospital a soup-kitchen in which were made the soups of that famous American, Benjamin Thompson, who married Lavoisier's widow, and got a title as Count Rumford. Its soup-kitchens are on a vast scale; last year more than two and one-third million platefuls were given away. Its children's dispensary (only founded last year, and valuable because it is down among the workpeople in the Rue de la Crimée, from which the regular children's hospitals are far away) is managed by the *Dames du Calvaire*. "By raising the standard of children's health," says M. du Camp, "no doubt it keeps down drunkenness, so largely due to the craving that comes from want of stamina."

Of the value of its women's night refuge here is an instance which does not tell very well for the goodness of heart of French keepers of young ladies' seminaries. One night a girl rushed into the refuge in the Rue St. Jacques, up

in the Latin quarter, crying: "Save me!" She was a teacher in a suburban school, where she only got her board and lodging; and as there was a week's holiday at Carnival, the mistress had sent her adrift to save her food. Knowing nothing of Paris, and with only twelve francs in her pocket, she had alighted at a little students' hotel; and had no sooner got to her room than a party of young roysterers, who had seen a pretty girl go upstairs, began hammering at the door. She rushed out into the street, and was guided by a policeman to the refuge, which was fortunately close by.

One is comforted to think that there is so much charity in Paris. A great deal of it is necessarily in the hands of priests and nuns, for France is, after all, still a Catholic country. But people like the philanthropic Madame Hottinguer of the Delessert family are certainly no bigots, any more than our own Miss de Broen, whose Belleville mission is doing so much. Neither are men like Abbé Bayle and Roussel, who to their orphanages couple on agricultural colonies, and who are always urging that in the landes of Brittany and Berri there is room to teach farming to all the orphans in all France.

Priests and Jesuits do always demand a confession of faith before doing a kindness. There are well-authenticated instances of Communard chiefs, hunted by the Versailles troops, being kept in hiding in churches.

The truth in regard to philanthropy seems to be that our human nature, being selfish, needs a motive, and of all motives, faith is the most energetic. Breadth is all very well; but, as with water, if you want it to do hard work you pen it up between narrow banks, so with human energy; to be effectual, it must in nine cases out of ten be narrow. The tenth case is that of the man of world-wide sympathies, whose all-embracing activity does not spend itself in talk.

"Help people to help themselves" is the motto of all these refuges and other like good works. "Sometimes a hand held out at the right moment is enough to save a life," and that without any interference with "the survival of the fittest;" for in the ups and downs of this modern life of ours, "the fittest" often get crushed by a blow that they could not be on their guard against.

In regard to Paris refuges the only thing we need to copy is the personal inspection

by the committee; it is like Oxford, and Cambridge, and Eton coming down (not only sending alms) to the East End. And it is done regularly.

AFTER THE RAIN.

ALL day the wild nor'-easter had swept across the plain;
All day against the lattice had plashed the driving rain.

And every budding flower, and every blade of grass,
Had owned the wild March weather, and bowed to let it pass.

Dull morn and joyless noontide, had worn themselves away,
The sun sank sullen to the west, behind a shroud of grey.

Sudden the great clouds parted, like a yawning cavern's mouth,
Soft and tender gleamed the light, the wind blew from the south;

And every drooping blossom raised her fair rain-washed head,
The primrose glimmered 'mid her leaves, the violet in her bed;

Catching the golden radiance, out blazed the daffodil,
And from the greening hedgerows the sparrows twittered shrill;

And where a woman waited, her eyes flashed back the light,
And with a happy smile she said, "My love will come to-night."

ACQUAINTANCES.

A STORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE scene is Avranches, the time evening. Two men are sitting in the public gardens listening to the band, which is practising for the forthcoming fête. But neither of them seems to have more than a cursory attention to give to Auber's overture.

"Is it a genuine case this time, Ernest?" said the younger one.

"Why say this time? Have I ever owned to a genuine case before?"

"No," replied Charles, "I can't say you have. It's unfortunate that the first time it is genuine there are difficulties in the way."

"There is an English proverb about that," said Ernest: "'True love never runs smooth,' or something to that effect. Fate is against me, and always has been."

"My dear fellow, that is doing fate an injustice. You have had plenty of successes—more than your share."

"It is that I complain of," said Ernest. "Had I been accustomed to disappointments, I might bear this one. I have had

successes, when I have not cared a straw whether I succeeded or not; now that it is a matter of life and death, I am doomed to have my wish unfulfilled."

Charles gave a light laugh.

"My dear boy, do you call a woman's love a matter of life and death?"

"It often has been," was Ernest's reply.

"Often to the woman than the man."

"Because it is the woman who is most often the disappointed one. In this case it is the man."

"But, even supposing that fate is against you for once, is it wise to stake happiness on one thing?"

Ernest shrugged his shoulders.

"My dear Charles, it is easy for you to be philosophical. You do not love Suzanne."

"I will if you wish," retorted Charles lightly.

"Let us go back to the hotel," said Ernest shortly.

Charles put his hand on his arm.

"Forgive me; I spoke stupidly; I can feel for you though I talk lightly. Is there anything I can do to show my sympathy?"

"Yes," said Ernest. "Let us get away from here; that band is too loud, and the people are getting thicker every minute."

He took his friend's arm, and they wandered slowly down the road that leads to the sands.

There was no one to interrupt them; the only passers-by were tired labourers on their way home, or an occasional carriage full of tourists being dragged up the hill by the weary horses.

"I will tell you what you can do for me," said Ernest, speaking gravely and earnestly; "I want a friend now, more than ever I have done before. I mean to see if you are one."

"You may take it for granted," was Charles's reply.

"I will. Suzanne, as you know, loves me; I love Suzanne more than life. Do you know why I cannot marry her?"

"I've never heard the whole story. She was betrothed before you stepped in, was she not?"

"No; this is the truth about it. Three years ago my elder brother, who was an officer, quarrelled with her father. There is no doubt whatever that my brother was in the right; the quarrel was forced on him. A duel followed, and Suzanne's father was killed."

"I never heard of that," said Charles in surprise.

"No ; it was hushed up, and my brother went to Algiers, where he died last year. Scarcely anyone knows the real cause of M. Devrière's death. You can easily imagine the two families saw little of each other afterwards. It happened, however, that Suzanne and I met in Paris ; she was ignorant of the whole story. I was loth to act as if there were any cause why we should not meet on friendly terms, the more so as I was greatly charmed with her. In a week the mischief was done. I was in love with her and could not leave her."

"And she?"

"I was not indifferent to her. But her aunt came on the scene, saw what was going on, and demanded an interview with me. I granted it, of course. She told me that either I must break off all intercourse with Suzanne, or tell her the whole story. I naturally refused to do either. The result was that she told Suzanne herself."

"Why could she not hold her tongue?" asked Charles angrily. "It was no good to spoil more lives."

"She was the dead man's sister. I cannot blame her. She told Suzanne, and ordered her never to see me again. But we had one more interview. I spent the most terrible hour of my life then."

Charles said nothing ; Ernest recovered his calm, which he had for a moment lost.

"She confessed her love for me, but refused to marry me. Her aunt threatened that if she ever saw me again the whole world should know she was going to marry the brother of the man who killed her father. She could not face that."

"Poor girl!" murmured Charles.

"I don't blame her," continued Ernest. "It would be a terrible thing to do. So we have separated."

"Do you think her aunt meant to carry out her threat?"

"I am certain of it. I left Paris the day after I saw Suzanne ; a week later I heard that she was betrothed to M. Courtin. I know she detests him ; she has often told me so. They are to be married next Monday."

"There is then no hope for you?"

"I suppose not," was the sad reply ; "yet there is always a chance. She may be braver than she imagines. I shall not despair finally till she is married. If she breaks it off I shall know the reason, and nothing shall separate us then."

"What is it that you wish me to do for you?" asked Charles, bringing the conversation round to practical matters.

"This," said Ernest. "I start to-morrow for England. I cannot stay here, I must travel, do something to try and get rid of the horrible monotony of my ordinary existence. I want you to send me word directly the marriage is over, or, better still, will you put an advertisement in the English Times? There is a column for that sort of advertisement. Berthin can tell you all about getting it in. Put it ambiguously, so that no one but I can tell what it means. Wherever I may be I shall be able to get a copy of the Times, I should think—especially if I keep where I can get one," he added with a smile.

"That is more in your old style," said his companion. "Do try and pull yourself together ; it's a bitter pill, but all isn't lost because you fail for once in your life."

"You are talking about what you don't understand," was Ernest's reply. "Let us get back."

There was very little conversation during the walk home, but when they were once more at the hotel, seated on a bench outside the salon, enjoying cigars and coffee, Charles took up the talk at the point at which it had been dropped.

"Can't you make up your mind definitely where you are going?" he asked. "If you will, I will try and run over myself and bring you the news, and then, perhaps, we can see something of England together."

"You are very kind, Charles, but I won't trespass on your kindness to that extent. I shall not be the sort of companion any man could stand. Besides, I really don't know where I am going."

"But how about your business? Aren't you going to have your letters forwarded?"

"No."

"Will no one know your address?"

"My dear Charles, if I don't tell you, do you think it probable I shall tell any one else?"

Charles saw it was no use to press the point ; he acquiesced with a shrug.

"And now, my dear fellow," said Ernest in a lighter tone, "let's have a game of billiards. I've bored you enough for one evening. Come indoors, and I'll promise you that you sha'n't have to complain of me any more to-night."

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning Charles rose at nine and came down to the coffee-room to have his cup of coffee and roll. His friend was not there, but at that he was scarcely

surprised, for they had sat up late the previous night.

"I half hope he won't take this mad journey after all," said Charles to himself; "he was all right last night after we came in—quite his old self again."

However, Ernest did not come down, and Charles finished his breakfast alone. Just as he had finished a waiter brought him a note. It was from Ernest.

"DEAR CHARLES,—I am off for England. Don't forget your promise.—Yours,
"ERNEST."

Charles was thunderstruck. But there was nothing to be done; he found that Ernest had started early in the morning, taking a carriage in order not to have to wait for the diligence to Pontorson. There was nothing for Charles to do but pack up his things and prepare to return to Paris; his little holiday had come to an untimely end.

Meanwhile Ernest Dumont was approaching Pontorson, where he intended taking the diligence. His only luggage consisted of a small valise. He was silent during the journey, to the great satisfaction of his blue-bloused driver, who was taciturnity itself. He neither demanded a *pourboire* nor gave any thanks when he received one.

Although Ernest had time enough on his hands, he yet was feverishly anxious to get to his destination, though he only vaguely knew what that destination was. The great thing was to get out of France. It would be easier to endure his anxiety when far away.

The boats and trains fitted well, and the same day that saw him leave Avranches saw him safely installed in a quiet hotel near Charing Cross. He entered his name as Eugène Dubois.

Once alone he entirely belied the assumed gaiety which he had shown when last with his friend. He threw himself into a chair and seemed utterly and entirely miserable.

Now that he was far from all his friends he began to feel the want of them. He had voluntarily expatriated himself; he had intentionally cut himself clear from all his old ties. Not a soul on earth knew where he was. Few, he thought sadly enough, would care. He was alone; it had been his wish to be so for weeks past, and now that his wish was fulfilled he was more miserable than ever.

However, he had enough sense left to know that the only way to prevent time

from dragging along interminably was to occupy himself. He had only been in London once before; suppose he were to have a solitary ramble? Surely in so busy a city there must be something to distract his thoughts.

He took his hat and passed out to the landing. Half unconsciously he began to descend the stairs. Not watching his footsteps carefully enough he thought he had reached the landing when there was another stair; the consequence was that he fell head foremost into the arms of an Englishman who was ascending.

The shock carried them both over, and Ernest received a hard blow on the head in the fall. He was half stunned for a minute; when he recovered his senses completely he found he was in the stranger's room.

"Hope you're all right?" said the Englishman.

"Thank you, yes; a little dizzy, that's all."

"Confoundedly dark staircase," said the other, pouring out some brandy and offering it to him; "it's a wonder people don't break their necks."

Both men were full of apologies, for each had been careless. The Englishman, whose name was Seymour, saw at a glance that Ernest was French, and as he knew the language well, he used it. Ernest was more glad than he would confess to find a sort of compatriot in the first man he had addressed on equal terms since crossing.

The two men chatted for some minutes, till Ernest said he had no further excuse for trespassing on the other's kindness, as he was quite recovered. However, they found they were both going out, so they left the hotel together.

The streets were crowded, and conversation was difficult. To add to their discomfort it began to rain. They discovered that neither had any fixed object for his stroll, so they adjourned to a café for a little shelter and a chat.

They talked for some time; each was in need of a companion. Seymour was on a visit to London from the north on business; Ernest wanted something to keep his thoughts away from himself. He was afraid to be alone now that he had come so far to be so.

The rain ceased, the clouds parted, and a white moon made the wet roofs and pavements glisten with a magical light. It was an enchanting scene, and the young men felt its beauty. There was no need

for them to hurry home, so they strolled along the silent Embankment arm-in-arm. At last twelve o'clock struck, and they mounted the steps by Waterloo Bridge preparatory to returning to the hotel.

"Come on the bridge, and see the moon and the lights in the water," said Seymour. "It's a wonderful sight."

They strolled on to the massive bridge, deserted except for an occasional passenger or a late cab. As they passed one of the recesses, Seymour noticed a man leaning over the parapet.

He was quite still, gazing at the water intently. Seymour did not feel comfortable when looking at him, but did not consider himself justified in speaking to him. When he had passed him he looked round to see if he were still as motionless as before. To Ernest's surprise his companion leapt from his side and rushed to the recess. He was too late. The man was gone. A dull splash in the dark waters below told what had become of him.

In horror Seymour raised a cry for help. Fortunately it was at hand; a police-boat was passing, and the wretched would-be suicide was rescued and brought to land.

When he was in safety Seymour returned to his companion, who had watched the scene with peculiar interest.

"Let us get back," said Seymour; "that horrible affair has upset me."

"Is that the way you manage these matters in England?" asked Ernest.

"I'm sorry to say that isn't the first fool who has jumped off Waterloo Bridge, and I'm afraid it won't be the last. Don't imagine, though, that as a nation we are given to that sort of thing."

"I hope not, at all events in that way," said the Frenchman. "It is ridiculous, or would be so, if there were not a touch of tragedy in it. Why did he throw himself into the water, when there are so many ways out of existence?"

"Perhaps he half hoped he might be saved, after all."

"He had his wish, in that case," replied Ernest. "What will become of him now?"

"I suppose he will go before a magistrate. The police have him in charge."

Ernest smiled.

"A romantic ending to a terrible story, is it not? We manage these things, at all events, better in France. I heard of a case the other day: A lover lost his mistress; he opened a vein in his arm, and died quietly during the night, without a soul

being any the wiser. You say we are a theatrical nation, yet it is you who throw yourselves off bridges, whilst we——"

"For Heaven's sake, man, do stop your horrible stories! Let us get on to some pleasanter subject than that of leaving this world."

"As you wish. Here we are at our hotel. Will you come up to my room for an hour? I won't talk of suicides, I promise you."

Seymour was anything but inclined for bed after his recent adventure, so gladly accepted.

Ernest sent for some refreshment, and it was past three before they separated, each delighted at having found a pleasant companion.

During the next three days they saw a great deal of each other. Seymour discovered that there was some mystery about his new acquaintance. He had apparently no object in being in London, had no friends, did not care an atom about the sights. Besides this, he had occasional fits of intense melancholy, and was often feverishly anxious for time to pass.

Nevertheless, he was generally an agreeable companion, and at his worst he was an interesting study. Seymour spent as much time as he could with him, especially in the evening. They seldom parted till the small hours.

One morning a small nephew of Seymour's came to see him, and greatly amused the two friends by his precocious ways. Ernest seemed to brighten more than he had done before, and laughed outright once at the youngster's grief at the fact that his father would not give him a watch yet. Seymour was delighted to see the melancholy Frenchman with so much life in him.

Next day, however, all gaiety had disappeared. He was feverishly anxious. It was Tuesday. He had gone out before breakfast to buy the Times.

There was nothing in it to interest him. He threw away the copy as soon as he had glanced down the column which was to contain the advertisement from his friend Charles.

That evening Seymour could do nothing with him. As a last resource he suggested a game of cards. Ernest instantly accepted, and urged high play; Seymour acquiesced against his will. Finally the Englishman lost a few pounds, which Ernest refused to accept. He had only played for the excitement. Seymour, however, naturally insisted on paying his losses.

Although they sat up late, Seymour could hear Ernest pacing up and down his room long after they parted. Their rooms were adjacent. Ernest did not go to bed that night.

By daylight he was in the street. He knew now where to get an early copy of the Times. His first glance told him all. Suzanne was married.

He crushed the paper in his hand. For a minute or two he stood motionless, then with a start he began walking to the hotel.

There was nothing remarkable about him when he came down to breakfast in the coffee-room, unless a quieter demeanour than usual might be deemed so. He spoke to Seymour when he entered, and hoped he did not disturb him by his early rising. Seymour did not know he had risen.

"Yes; I went out for a stroll—to Waterloo Bridge. By-the-bye, I hope you will let me give you your revenge this evening; that little game last night pulled me together wonderfully. I've been feverish the last few days."

"I'm not anxious for my revenge," said Seymour; "I don't often play."

"Nor I, and I am never comfortable until I lose. You will do me a favour if you will give me the chance. It calms my brain; it's as good as medicine to me."

Seymour laughed and promised. He saw nothing of Ernest the whole day, but they had appointed to meet at ten o'clock.

Ernest spent the afternoon in going through his possessions. He had nothing with him to declare his identity. His linen was only marked with initials, which stood equally well for his real and assumed names. The few letters in his pockets he tore up, with one exception.

This was in a lady's hand. He read it through slowly and carefully, kissed it, and then burnt it to ashes. He then wrote a couple of letters, which occupied him till his visitor was due.

At ten o'clock Seymour arrived. Ernest welcomed him more gaily than usual.

"Have you seen little Tom to-day?" he asked.

"No; I'm going to see him to-morrow."

"Will you give him a little present from me? He wants a watch—do you think this will do for him?"

He held out his gold timepiece with a chain attached. Seymour looked up in astonishment.

"You won't accept it for him? You must! I will not keep it. It was given

me by a man who has just tried to kill my best friend in a duel; if you won't take it for little Tommy, I will smash it with my boot, and then drop it into the river. Will you take it?"

Seymour made some ineffectual protests, but at last was forced to take it. He made up his mind, however, that his possession of it should only be temporary; the whole affair was absurd.

They began to play. Ernest had the luck at first, but it soon turned. Seymour won, and by midnight had more than recouped himself. In another hour he refused to play any more; he calculated he had won over twenty pounds.

"You won't go on?" asked Ernest. "Then I must fulfil my duty; I am a good loser, you see."

He handed over notes and gold, amounting to over forty pounds. The money included several napoleons.

"I have not won all this," said Seymour. "You have made a mistake."

"Oh no; we were playing for the same stakes as last night."

"I did not understand that."

"But I did; and as I lost, it is for me to decide. You taught me last evening to insist on paying my losses."

Seymour protested; but Ernest insisted. Seymour resolved to lose it to him again at the first opportunity.

Three o'clock struck as they parted. Seymour crept quietly back to his room, tired out, as he had had a hard day. He determined to have a good night's rest.

Ernest did not come down to breakfast next morning. Seymour waited about some time, hoping to see him, and at last told the waiter to go and call him as it was nearly eleven.

The man was some time in returning. Obtaining no answer to his knock he had opened the door to take in the hot water which was standing outside. On the bed he saw the Frenchman lying, his throat cut.

The waiter was a man of sense. He locked the door on the outside, put the key in his pocket, and went to tell his master what he had found.

Before a single person in the hotel knew what had happened, a detective had the affair in his charge. The waiter told Seymour that Mr. Dubois was in bed, and would be able to see no one. Seymour was obliged to go out to keep a business appointment; when he returned in the evening, it was to find that he was arrested on the charge of murdering M. Dubois.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER the first shock of surprise and horror was over, Seymour began to recognise his position. He sent for a solicitor, with whom he was acquainted, and told him the whole story. Mr. Fuller listened attentively. Fortunately for Seymour's peace of mind, he was entirely convinced of his client's innocence, though he did not hold out many hopes of being able to prove it easily.

"Appearances are terribly against you," he said. "You are known to have been on intimate terms with Dubois. You are found to have his watch and his money; there was absolutely none found on him. Assuming that he was killed for his money, it is to you that suspicion must point."

Seymour groaned.

"I was afraid sometimes that he had something on his mind," he said. "I see now why he gave me the watch and made me win his money; he recognised that I had been kind to him, and wished that what he had of value might benefit me."

"I wish to goodness he had found some other way of doing it," said Mr. Fuller. "I'm afraid a jury will not see things in their real light. Does anyone know you played cards with him? If so that would help to account for your possession of the money, and we might suppose that he committed suicide because he lost so much to you."

Seymour was obliged to confess that no one had entered the room on either night that they played. Worse than that, it appeared that the waiter had seen him returning from Ernest's room on the night of his death, at three in the morning. The room in which they had played was a large one, with a bed in the corner, the rest of the room was furnished as a sitting-room.

Of course every care was taken to gather every particle of evidence in Seymour's favour. The razor was Ernest's—a small point, perhaps, but worth noting. Then there was no sign of a struggle. The natural answer to that was that Ernest was asleep. It unfortunately happened that there was not an atom of circumstantial evidence in the prisoner's favour which could not be met, whilst on the other hand were some of the most convincing facts that ever sent a man to the scaffold.

Perhaps the points on which Seymour's lawyers chiefly depended were his inexplicable conduct, supposing he were the

murderer; and the hope of discovering who the dead man really was. It was to the latter point that Mr. Fuller bent his attention.

Seymour had lived in France a considerable time, and had numerous friends in Paris. Some of these were written to, and as more than one had considerable influence in literary circles, paragraphs appeared in several journals detailing the mystery of the Frenchman's death. Advertisements were also inserted, which, it was hoped, would bring some result.

However, more than a week passed, and nothing happened. Ernest had but few relations, and as he was of a retiring disposition and reserved in his habits, they were not surprised at receiving no letters from him. Moreover, he had intimidated his intention of passing a month in Normandy and Brittany, and that time was not yet up.

There was, however, one man who was on the look-out for news, and that was Charles. Unfortunately called to Germany the day after he had inserted the notice of Suzanne's marriage in the Times, he was, for more than a week, out of reach of French newspapers. The first that he saw on his return contained an account of Ernest's death.

He had not a moment's doubt that Dubois and Ernest were the same. If he had not jumped to that conclusion, a letter, which he found waiting for him on his return home, must have dispelled all doubt.

It was dated, but bore no address. The postmark was London. It ran thus:

"I must thank you for keeping your promise. Suzanne is married. She is dead to me, as she has shown that she wishes never to see me again.

"I have nothing now to live for. As you know, I have few near relations, and dislike those which I have. No one will regret my exit from this life, except, perhaps, you and two or three more. You will soon forget me. I am glad, however, to be able to do you a slight kindness. The enclosed paper will transfer to you my house in Paris.

"You see that my mind has been made up some time. I do not falter in the least. Before you receive this I shall be no more.

"I have not been so alone in London as I anticipated. I have made a friend. He has charmed me by his kindness. To-night we meet for the last time, though he does not know it. I have a plan for making him

easily console himself for losing an acquaintance of a few days' standing. From what he has told me, he will soon be married, and I fear his means are not too extensive. So, when we play *écarté* to-night, he will rise a winner of sufficient to pay for his honeymoon, at all events. This is not generosity on my part. Of what use is money to me?

"Good-bye, my dear Charles. You will understand me, if the others do not. We have often talked of life together; you know my thoughts, and though here they will attribute my action to insanity, you know it is the deed of a sane, hopeless man. Adieu!

ERNEST."

Charles read the letter with mingled feelings. He did not, however, remain long without taking action. The paragraph in the paper stated that an innocent man had been charged with the murder of the unhappy suicide.

Charles knew little of English law, and for a moment feared that perhaps Justice had overtaken her victim already. He ran to the telegraph-office, and even wrote out a telegram before he recognised that he did not know where to send it.

Sooner than not dispatch it, he addressed it to the Chief of Police, promising to come to England to explain. It happened that he never glanced at the advertisement column of the paper, so that Mr. Fuller's appeal escaped his notice.

Thus it was that the first intimation that Seymour received of the possibility of proving his innocence was the entrance of Mr. Fuller with Ernest's letter to Charles in his hand.

The identity of the dead man with Ernest was easily established, the proof of Seymour's innocence was made abundantly clear. Before Charles returned to France he saw Seymour set at liberty.

One duty he had to perform before he left England, and that was to erect a memorial-stone to his friend. Far from home and friends rested the remains of an unhappy man, whose very generosity to others seemed fated to bring them misery instead of happiness.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XVIII. ACROSS THE CHANNEL.

THOUGH Lady Redcliff was not exactly the confidante that most girls would have chosen, there was no one else in the world to whom Theo could have told her story.

If circumstances had given her friends of her own age, this would have been still the same; the most sympathetic of them would not have been to Theo what her hard, ill-tempered, sarcastic, unloving old grandmother was. There was some strange mysterious link between them, and their frequent quarrels never ended in a real misunderstanding; through all difficulties they kept their respect for each other, and their odd, cold, mutual love. No one would have dreamed of expecting an affectionate word or a caress from Lady Redcliff; and Theo, with so much tenderness and softness in her nature, never even kissed her grandmother; yet that evening she had told her all that was in her heart, almost more than she knew herself, and when she felt ashamed of this confidence afterwards, and wished she had been wise, and hard, and strong about it all, there was still comfort in the thought that grandmamma knew exactly what she meant, and would stand by her, whatever turn events might take in the future.

That was a very lonely spring. She did not wish to see Hugh, and did not see him. Helen wrote a short letter now and then, without a word of news in it. All the stir of the London season went on round Theo, she saw names of her cousins here and there in the *Morning Post*, but she was alone in the middle of it all.

At last one night she found herself at the hotel at Dover, with her grandmother in a terribly bad temper. Combe, Lady Redcliff's maid, Sparrow, and Jackson, the butler, were in attendance. Lady Redcliff had made up her mind suddenly to go abroad, and Theo had submitted to be carried off, without much feeling of pleasure or pain. She was glad to leave London, but she did not care at all for the idea of lakes, or mountains, or foreigners. There had been two or three weeks of tiring warm weather; it was now the end of April; but on the very day they left London it rained and blew in a tiresome, stormy manner, and Theo felt almost as cross as her grandmother, as she looked out from the Lord Warden on a muddy, unpleasant sea.

The next morning things looked a little brighter; the sun flashed out now and then through hurrying clouds driven by a strong north-west wind. Theo went out early with Combe, and walked about Dover. Combe was dismal; she hated hotels and travelling, and was angry with Lady Redcliff for starting off so suddenly, giving

one hardly time to pack, much less to get Miss Theo a proper travelling-dress.

"Don't be silly, Combe," said Theo as she grumbled on. "Any old clothes will do to travel in."

"I never could bear those foreign hotels," said Combe. "England is the place for me; and it's not only me; Mrs. Sparrow is of the same opinion, and she says her ladyship would be much better at home at her age, and with her uncertain health. She and me, we both have a feeling that this foreign trip will lead to no good, Miss Theo."

"You are both cowardly, and afraid of a little discomfort," said Theo. "Suppose I was going out to Africa as a missionary, which I think of doing some day, you wouldn't come with me, of course, Combe? After all, though," smiling rather drearily at herself, "a missionary with a lady's-maid wouldn't do, would it?"

"Miss Theo, if you went to tropic lands, or to the frozen ocean, there's nowhere I wouldn't follow; and you know that well," said Combe with tears in her eyes. "But I don't like to hear you joke on a serious subject, miss."

They had just reached the porch of the Lord Warden. Theo was smiling, partly at her own ideas, partly at Combe's protestations. Jackson was looking out for them with an anxious face; but before he could speak, a young man in a brown overcoat came out and met them face to face.

There were a few hurried, confused exclamations: "When did you come? Are you staying here?" and so on; but after the first moment Theo was conscious that Gerald Fane did not look half so happy, half so much pleased to see her, as that last day in the picture-gallery. Perhaps it was because poor Theo, for once, was hypocritically careless in her manner to him.

"If you please, miss," said Jackson, "her ladyship is waiting for you. She is quite ready to go on board."

"Going on board!" said Gerald, astonished.

"We are going to the lakes—to Basle first," said Theo. "Good-bye."

"Oh no—so am I." Theo thought he said that, but he was gone, and she hurried up at once to her grandmother's room.

Lady Redcliff was in a terrible fuss. She scolded Theo bitterly for running away to amuse herself, for taking Combe, and leaving all the bother before starting to her and that wretched, useless Sparrow.

"She and Jackson are two utterly in-

capable idiots," cried the old lady. "Bills to pay, bags to pack—they haven't got a head or a pair of hands between them. What did I bring you and Combe for, if it wasn't to make yourselves useful? I declare if we had not taken that ridiculous sleeping-carriage, I would go back to town by the next train just to punish you all. How can you be so selfish, Theo, so thoughtless!" She sat in an armchair, and went on scolding at the top of her voice.

Theo took no notice of her indignation.

"Are my things ready?" she said to Combe. "Help Sparrow, then," and she pointed to the floor, on which a few bags and boxes stood open, with Sparrow crying in the middle of them.

On the whole, it was not a promising beginning of their foreign tour. Theo bore it philosophically, however. She took command quietly, for Lady Redcliff's two servants really seemed to have lost their wits for the time. Afterwards she could not in the least remember what she had said or done, for her head was entirely full of something else; but there was something about Theo which brought the most hardened waiters and chambermaids to her feet; and by-and-by she took the whole party safely down to the boat, Lady Redcliff keeping up a modified scolding and grumbling the whole time.

"Give me your arm to go on board, Theo," she said. "Get away, Sparrow; you are worse than useless."

Theo turned her head by instinct at that moment, and found Gerald Fane standing close behind her. He was looking very grave, but, as their eyes met, she could not help smiling, and once more his face brightened all over at her glance.

Lady Redcliff, who was quickness itself, caught with astonishment the look in the handsome hazel eyes that were fixed on Theo. She took him in at once—a tall young man, slightly stooping at this moment, with an odd mixture in his face of boyish happiness and discontent, with a certain elegance, and yet no air of prosperity, but rather the reverse. It was a quick, nervous face, without much strength in it, perhaps, but also without the smallest touch of heaviness or stupidity.

"Who's that?" said Lady Redcliff.

"Mr. Fane, grandmamma," said Theo gently.

"I thought so. Will you give me your arm across these planks, Mr. Fane? I'm a nervous old woman, and I hate travelling."

Gerald instantly came forward, and took her on board with the greatest care. Theo followed, with a painful flush on her face.

Why should her grandmother have said, "I thought so!" What a thing to say! What would Mr. Fane understand by it?

This same thought may have struck Lady Redcliff herself, for as Gerald guided her along the deck she looked up at him and said:

"Do you know how I recognised you just now?"

"Did you? No, really I don't," said Gerald.

"I once knew some one of your name," said Lady Redcliff. "He must have been a relation, for you are the very image of him."

"My father, perhaps?"

"No—nor your grandfather. He never married, and died young. I can't talk in this crowd. Are you going on with us?"

"I believe so. At least, as far as Basle," said Gerald, glancing round to see if Theo was following.

She came up just then to the other side of her grandmother.

"You will go below, won't you?" she said. "It is cold on deck, and they say it is going to be rough."

"Yes, I'll go below," said Lady Redcliff. "Mr. Fane will help me down those dreadful stairs, I'm sure."

Gerald did this, and fled. Theo stayed a few minutes with her grandmother, and then, leaving her and the maids in settled misery, came on deck, wrapped in a large shawl, and sat down in a breezy place, looking out over the rough, green sea.

The spray damped her hair; the fresh, salt wind painted her pale cheeks a pretty red. As the boat went driving along, the air and movement seemed to bring new life to her whole nature. She began to feel a wild, happy excitement, as if she was riding Aster fast over a boundless stretch of moor.

She wished in her mind that it was all sea, that for days, and weeks, and months she could be carried on thus. Then, with a little self-reproachful smile, she thought that few people on board would agree with her.

She could not help saying what she felt to Gerald Fane, who presently came across to her from the other side of the boat, where he had been smoking.

"Isn't this glorious, and fresh, and delightful?" she said to him. "How one

would enjoy a long voyage! There is such freedom in the sea."

"Yes," said Gerald. But he was not very enthusiastic. "May I sit down here?" he said. "It is very strange to meet you again like this."

Theo forgot the glorious freshness of the sea, and looked at him with a quick glance. He spoke so sadly that she was puzzled.

In their last talk—those ten minutes at Burlington House—he had been ready to forget everything but the pleasure of talking to her. What was the matter with him now?

"Are you going to have a holiday in Switzerland?" she said. "Isn't it rather early for the mountains?"

"Not exactly a holiday; those are things I don't have," said Gerald, staring at the sea.

Theo paused a moment; it struck her again how very grave he looked, with something of the hopelessness that had been in his face that evening at the gate—some silent trouble that was beyond her curing. And yet, was that possible?

"Why doesn't he tell me all about it?" thought Theo unreasonably. "He is very stupid." Then she said in a low voice: "I am afraid you have been ill. I hope nothing is wrong with your sister?"

"How did you know? I believe you know everything," said Gerald, looking at her.

Her bright sea-colour deepened a little, but she smiled.

"No, I don't. Tell me," she said very softly.

"It is a horrid story. I ought not to plague you with it," said Gerald after a pause.

"If you don't mind telling me, I should very much like to hear. What can it be?" said Theo anxiously. "I might be able to help you."

"No, thanks—thanks, you couldn't," he said in a tone of great pain. "If I can catch them, that's all I want—to catch them in time."

Theo looked up in horror.

"My brother took Ada abroad a week ago; he said she was looking thin, and it would do her good. They were going up the Rhine into Switzerland; he talked of staying three weeks or so. Yesterday by the second post I got a line from Ada, from Basle, to say that Mr. Warren had met them there. You remember that fellow?"

"Yes, certainly," said Theo, listening with the deepest interest.

"She said Clarence was arranging with him to go on into Italy, but they wouldn't tell her where they were going. They laughed when she asked questions, and told her to wait a little. She hated Warren more than ever, and his manners were worse, she said. She was frightened and vexed, and didn't want to go on; she had told Clarence, but he laughed at her. Unfortunately I know what it all means, Miss Meynell. That brute wants to marry Ada, and he and Clarence know very well that they will never get my consent, so they think they are going to do it without it. Now you understand that I'm mad with impatience, and I mean to travel night and day till I catch them," he said, setting his teeth, and pressing his hands together. "It's a wild-goose chase, but I may find out at Basle where they are gone. Ada wrote to me without Clarence's knowledge, so he won't guess that I am on the track—old rascal!"

"But it seems to me most wonderful that he should wish it," said Theo after a moment. "I thought he was kind to your sister."

"He finds himself so mixed up with Warren, so bound, that he can refuse him nothing. If you will believe me, this is an old bargain between them. I knew nothing of it till one day last autumn, while you were at Woodcote. Clarence and I fought over it then, and I did make him promise to say nothing to Ada till after she was seventeen—that's a fortnight ago now. I was a tremendous fool to let him take her abroad, but if I thought at all, I thought Warren was far enough off in Italy—he was in Sicily when we heard last—and she had had such an awfully dull winter, poor child, with no one but me, and no friends near, and she liked the idea of going."

"Don't be unhappy," said Theo, as he stopped suddenly. "It is a great trouble, but you will catch them in time, I feel sure."

"I don't seem to realise what a trouble it is," said Gerald, "and yet I haven't slept since I got her letter."

"Do you know I am not entirely surprised," said Theo after a few moments of silent sympathy. "I heard a report last year when I was at Woodcote, but I could hardly believe it."

"Who from?" asked Gerald almost sternly.

"Some one had heard Mr. Warren talking in a railway-carriage. None of us liked to believe it. It was very much on my mind when I came to see your sister that day, but I saw she knew nothing, and I felt sure you would take care of her; but I took one liberty, for which you must forgive me. I gave her my address, and told her to write to me if she ever wanted any help—if I could do anything for her, I mean. Of course I knew she had you, but still a girl sometimes wants a girl to speak to."

"It was angelically kind of you," said Gerald. "But that brute—talking about her in a railway-carriage—that would astonish Clarence, I think. If I ever get at him——"

Theo was almost startled by the energy of anger in his face and voice, yet she admired it; it was a little catching, too, and there was a lovely light in her eyes as she looked at him. She liked Gerald all the better because he could almost forget her presence in his anger for Ada, and a wild wish crossed her mind that they, too, were going to tear on night and day till they overtook those scheming men, and rescued Ada. Her grandmother would have entered into such a plan very heartily some years ago; perhaps she was too old for it now; and there was an odd incongruity in the thought of Combe, and Sparrow, and Jackson, all chasing over Europe with their many packages, turned, as it were, into active members of a police force.

She resolved, however, that her grandmother should hear the story, which would interest her still more in Mr. Fane and his doings.

The passage was only too quick for these people, who had much more to say to each other than could possibly be said in an hour and a half. It was true that after Gerald had poured out his troubles and anxieties, and began to realise more and more vividly who was near him, listening to him, his talk did not run quite so easily. But there was so much to say, so much to find out, if only one had dared to use one's tongue. As one could only look, the pain and doubt were as great as the pleasure; yet it was not only Gerald who felt a kind of despairing chill when they reached Calais pier.

"What a horrid crowd! Where's Mr. Fane? I want him to take me on shore," said Lady Redcliff, emerging from the cabin.

"Take my arm, grandmamma. Won't that do?" said Theo.

"No, it won't. Where is he?"

Theo did not at all intend to answer these imperious questions by summoning Gerald, and putting her grandmother in his charge; but at that moment he came up, saying in a low voice, "Can I be of any use?" and Lady Redcliff instantly took possession of him.

Theo could not help being a little amused, as she followed them along the station, to hear her grandmother telling him their arrangements for the journey, and asking him to order luncheon for them. As they went into the buffet, Gerald looked at Theo with a smile which was both a question and an apology. The answer being satisfactory, he devoted himself to Lady Redcliff's wishes with a sort of quiet enthusiasm, and did not leave them till they were safely established in their carriage.

"I'm going second-class, but I shall see you at some of the stations," he said as they parted.

"Yes; we shall expect you to look after us; you are a very useful person," said Lady Redcliff.

He looked at Theo, took off his hat, and went away.

"I am in love with him, too," said Lady Redcliff, tucking herself up on her sofa.

"I thought we were making a little too much use of him," said Theo dreamily, as the train began to groan and rattle, and move slowly on.

"Don't be jealous; he doesn't belong to you yet," said Lady Redcliff. "And I'm afraid it won't do, my dear, so you need not exert yourself to be angry. That man will never make his fortune; he is far too much of a gentleman. He is born to spend money, not to scrape it together, and the want of it has soured his temper a little already. No, it won't do, Theo; those stupid cousins of yours were right for once. Do you mind much, child?"

Theo made no answer; she was staring out of the window at the masts of Calais.

"I hope he isn't going to dawdle about the lakes too?" said Lady Redcliff.

"Oh no, indeed," said Theo, turning to her grandmother with flushed cheeks and shining eyes. "He has something very different to think about."

As they travelled on towards Amiens, she told her grandmother the story that Gerald had told her on board.

"The men are brutes, and the girl is a fool," said Lady Redcliff. "I suppose you want to go and look for her too."

"I can't, you know," said Theo.

"No; you are tied and hampered by your duty to me. Luckily for you, perhaps," said Lady Redcliff rather thoughtfully. "No, I like the young man; he is intelligent, and his face is so very familiar; but I can't have you and myself entangled with a lot of second-rate people."

"Second-rate, grandmamma! You are as bad as the Goodalls."

"Heaven forbid! Don't insult me, or I'll take you back to England from the next station. Money-grubbing people who come out of coal-pits are not exactly the companions for you and me, Theo; therefore, if we drop upon these runaways anywhere, you are to understand that I'll have nothing to do with them."

"You can do as you please," replied Theo. "I shall take Ada Fane, and keep her till her brother comes."

This was a very fair beginning of a quarrel, but it was checked by Amiens station, and the appearance of Gerald, who told Theo rather shyly that if she liked to hurry to the buffet there was time for a cup of tea. Lady Redcliff's face cleared up at the sight of him.

"Get along," she said to her granddaughter, "and come back in a better temper."

She thrust her old head, wrapped in a black shawl, out of the carriage window, and half laughed, half sighed, as she looked after the two slim young creatures hurrying up the platform.

"I can't stand that boy's eyes at all," she muttered to herself. "But nonsense, it won't do! I haven't got enough to leave Theo, and, if I had, I can't die for their benefit, that's rather too much to expect. It's a tiresome, provoking business, for of course it must come to nothing in the end. I wish that silly old Peters had never told me to go abroad. Ah, there you are, Sparrow. Ashamed of yourself, I hope."

Poor Sparrow, who had come from her own carriage to see if her mistress wanted anything, was a convenient object of wrath till Gerald Fane brought Theo back again. She was looking happy and lovely, the cup of tea seemed to have done all that her grandmother could have wished.

Lady Redcliff glanced from her to Gerald, and something seemed to touch her hard old heart. When he was gone, and they were off again, she made no more

attacks on Theo and her friends, but lay curled up like a black cat in the corner, watching the girl under half-closed eyelids, as she sat upright, and looked out quietly over the broad yellow fields and sweeping downs and plains of France, where the sun was setting.

They saw Gerald again at Tergnier, where he dined with them. Theo was rather silent, but Lady Redcliff talked a good deal to him, and discovered that her Captain Fane was his grandfather's brother; this lifted him very high in her favour. Probably Gerald himself did not care much, having quite enough to occupy his mind that evening, but he was perfectly polite to the old lady, who for her part had not been so civil to any one for years.

Then came the long, dark, weary, clamorous night. As they rushed along Lady Redcliff slept quite peacefully, but Theo remained wide awake all through those hours, and so did Gerald in his part of the train. Then came green valleys and fir-woods in the early morning, and Basle, and the "Three Kings." Gerald went with them to the hotel, hoping to find his brother's name in the visitor's book, but it was not there, and he started off to search the other hotels for it. Poor little Ada, in her haste and anxiety, had only dated her letter from Basle.

In the evening he came again to the Three Kings. A few people, looking more or less bored, were turning over papers in the salon. Lady Redcliff was there, in a large armchair by one of the windows; she did not look at all bored, but very lively and malicious, and was reading a French novel. Theo was not to be seen in the room. Several eyes were turned on the fine, graceful figure and eager face of the young man, in his travelling clothes, looking so worn and unhappy. He came across at once to Lady Redcliff.

"I have traced them," he said in a low voice. "They went from here to Lucerne for one night, and then on to Como. There is a train to-night, and I must be off in ten minutes." He looked round the room again. "Miss Meynell is not here—will you tell her, and say good-bye for me?"

Lady Redcliff looked hard at him for a moment, smiled, and pointed to one of the windows, which stood a little open on the balcony. Gerald stepped out at once into the evening air, on the long, low balcony

with its drapery of green leaves, into the rush of the magnificent Rhine, rolling away to the west.

At the far end of the balcony Theo was standing bare-headed, facing the evening light, which gilded her dark hair and flushed her cheeks; but when she turned to meet Gerald, the shadow of night and parting was in her eyes.

The moment was so beautiful, the river and the sky were so full of happy, solemn glory, and he had only come to tell her that he was going! For a minute or two he forgot to speak; they looked at each other once, and then stood a little apart, looking at the rushing river. But this could not go on; he began to speak rather quickly, and told her what he had just told Lady Redcliff.

"So I must say good-bye, now," he said.

"Good-bye," said Theo, very low.

"Will you think of me now and then," said Gerald, with a sudden passionate sadness in his voice, "and—hope I may be in time!"

"You know I will," said Theo.

He stood silent a moment longer, looking down into her face, but she did not look up at him.

"Good-bye!" he said again, and he suddenly stooped, caught both her hands, and kissed them. "Forgive me—say you forgive me! You have known it all this time, and one can't live for ever on nothing."

Then bells began to ring, and clocks to chime in the city.

"I must go," he said; and then Theo lifted her eyes, but he was gone.

He hurried through the salon, where Lady Redcliff shook her head at him, and called out:

"Let us hear of you."

As for Theo, she stood still on the balcony in a dream, while the Rhine flowed past her feet in his strong, majestic current towards the red and orange and purple sunset sky.

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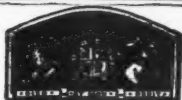
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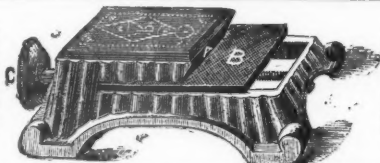
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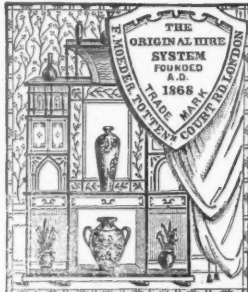
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